

CONSUMER ALERT



JOSEPH R. BIDEN, III
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Consumer Protection Unit

New Castle County - (302) 577-8600

Kent County - (302) 739-7641

Sussex County - (302) 856-5353

Toll Free Consumer Hotline - (800) 220-5424

Consumer.Protection@State.DE.US

VETERANS AFFAIRS

The FBI is currently working with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Inspector General (VA-OIG) and the Montgomery County Department of Police (MCDP) to recover a stolen laptop computer and external hard drive containing the personal identifying information of 26.5 million US veterans. The identifying information is the property of the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The laptop computer and external hard drive were stolen from a private residence in Montgomery County, Maryland, during the course of a burglary on 05/03/2006. At this stage of the investigation, there is no evidence that the suspect(s) responsible for the theft had any knowledge of what information was stored on the hard drive. The joint investigation into the identity of the subject(s) is ongoing. Much information pertaining to this matter has been reported by multiple news organizations throughout the past month.

At this time, the primary objective of the investigation is the recovery of the laptop and external hard drive. The FBI is asking for any information that may lead to the recovery of the laptop and/or hard drive, and the data they contained. Anyone who can provide information leading to the recovery of these items should call Crime Solvers of Montgomery County at 1-866-411-TIPS (8477). There is a cash reward of \$50,000 for information provided to the Crime Solvers tip line that leads to the recovery of these items.

If you are a US Veteran discharged after 1975, please closely monitor your bank statements and take recommended steps to protect yourself against identity theft. The Federal Trade Commission has produced a booklet entitled "TAKE CHARGE: Fighting Back Against Identity Theft". Its contents are available at www.consumer.gov/idtheft or you can call 1-877-438-4338. Additionally, the Department of Veterans Affairs will post updated information about this matter for Veterans to www.firstgov.gov/veteransinfo or call 1-800-333-4636.

Information on how to protect yourself from becoming a victim of an identity thief is also available through the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit by calling (800) 220-5424 and at his website at attorneygeneral.delaware.gov. The Attorney General's Identity Theft Victim Kit containing a step by step guide for victims on what they need to do to report and document the incident is also available from the Consumer Protection Unit and on the Attorney General's website.